

Remarks

Claims 18-21 and 27-43 are pending. Claim 18 has been amended. Applicants would like to point out that the claim amendment does not narrow the scope of the claim, but rather serves to more clearly describe the invention encompassed. Claim 1 has been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of any of the canceled claims in one or more divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part applications.

The Restriction Requirement

In the Office Action, restriction is required to one of the following groups of invention:

Group I, Claim 1 drawn to a method for measuring the ability of a compound to alter HCV activity using a beta-lactamase reporter system; and

Group II, Claims 18-21 and 27-43 drawn to a chimeric HCV replicon.

In order to be fully responsive, Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, Group II, claims 18-21 and 27-43, to prosecute in the present application without prejudice to prosecution of the subject matter of the non-elected groups in subsequent applications.

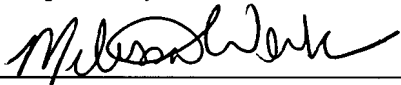
The Examiner has also required three species elections upon the election of Group II. Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, SEQ ID NO:2 (claims 21, 39-43), NS5B polymerase (claims 31, 32, 40 and 41), and clinical isolates (claims 20, 21, 28, 31-42).

Conclusion

It is believed that the claims now pending are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action by the Examiner is earnestly requested.

Authorization

No fee is believed to be due. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to deposit account 13-2755.

Respectfully submitted,
Dated: May 24, 2007 By: 
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